



David B. Cohen
Mayor

CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Planning and Development

Michael J. Kruse, Director

Telephone
(617):796-1120

TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089

Telefax
(617) 796-1142

E-mail
mkruse@newtonma.gov

Public Hearing Date: October 9, 2007
Land Use Action Date: December 11, 2007
Board of Aldermen Action Date: December 17, 2007
90-Day Expiration Date: January 8, 2008

TO: Board of Aldermen

FROM: Michael Kruse, Director of Planning and Development
Candace Havens, Chief Planner
Robert Merryman, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Petition #276-07 of LEONARD H. STRAUSS, D.M.D., P.C. for a CHANGE OF ZONE from PUBLIC USE to BUSINESS 1 DISTRICT at 18 STATION AVENUE, Newton Highlands, Ward 6, Section 52, Block 22, a portion of Lot 1 containing approximately 8,500 sq.ft. in a Public Use District.

Petition #276-07(2) of LEONARD H. STRAUSS, D.M.D., P.C. for SPECIAL PERMIT/ SITE PLAN APPROVAL for a parking waiver of 3 stalls (including 1 handicapped stall); a free standing sign; and secondary signs associated with a proposed professional office at 18 STATION AVENUE, Newton Highlands, Ward 6, Section 52, Block 22, a portion of Lot 1 containing approximately 8,500 sq.ft. in a Business 1 District.

CC: Mayor David B. Cohen

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Board of Aldermen and the public with technical information and planning analysis which may be useful in the special permit decision making process of the Board of Aldermen. The Planning Department's intention is to provide a balanced view of the issues with the information it has at the time of the public hearing. There may be other information presented at or after the public hearing that the Land Use Committee of the Board of Aldermen will want to consider in its discussion at a subsequent Working Session.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City records indicate that only the station building footprint is within Business 1 District. As such, petitioner has requested a rezoning of the approximately 8,500 sq.ft. lot area from the Public Use District to the Business 1 District. In addition, the petitioner requests a

special permit to allow for the proposed conversion of the auto supply business to a dental office with additional waivers of the parking and sign ordinances.

BACKGROUND

The existing railroad station (formerly the MBTA Newton Highlands Station) was constructed in 1886 prior to the 1922 adoption of the City's first Zoning Ordinance. In 1962, the footprint of the railroad station structure was placed within a Business A District, now a Business 1 District, to allow the as-of-right use (*the then existing auto parts store*). Once the auto parts store vacated the station in 2005, the MBTA issued an "invitation to Bid" for the parcel that includes the railroad station and, subsequently, sold the approximately 11,504 sq.ft. lot to the petitioner.

II. ELEMENTS OF THE PETITION

Assuming the Board of Aldermen grants the proposed change of zone, the petitioner is planning to convert the former auto parts store into two dental offices (*use allowed by right*). The petitioner requests parking waivers for three stalls and a handicap parking space. The proposed 5 sq.ft. freestanding sign is significantly smaller than the maximum 35 sq.ft. allowed in a Business 1 District. The secondary wall signs each measure 8.14 sq.ft. in size. Two signs are proposed on the easterly side of the building facing the train tracks and two signs are proposed on the westerly side, facing Station Avenue.

III. ZONING RELIEF SOUGHT

A. *Change of Zone*

The petitioner is seeking a change of zoning for a portion of Lot 1 containing approximately 8,500 sq.ft. of land from the Public Use District to the Business 1 District.

B. *Special Permits*

The petitioner is seeking relief from or approvals through the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance:

- *Section 30-24(d) for Special Permit;*
- > *Section 30-23 for Site Plan Approval;*
- > *Section 30-20(1)(9) &(l) for a special permit for a new freestanding historic marker sign;*
- *Section 30-20(1)(2) &(l) for a special permit for additional secondary wall signs; and*
- > *Section 30-19(m) for a special permit for exceptions to the parking ordinance. The following waivers are required through this section:*
 - a. *Section 30-19(d)(12) to reduce the required parking by 3 stalls.*
 - b. *Section 30-19(h)(2)(c) to waive the required handicap parking stall.*

The City's Chief Zoning Code Official has completed his review of this application and a copy of his memorandum, dated August 29, 2007 is attached to this document. (SEE ATTACHMENT "A '9

IV. **SIGNIFICANT ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

In reviewing this petition the Board of Aldermen should consider the following:

- > Whether the proposed parking waivers would have any adverse affects on the abutters or the immediate neighborhood;*
- > Whether the public convenience and welfare will be served through the development of this project; and*
- Whether the increased number of proposed signs would be compatible with the nearby commercial district and the adjacent residential neighborhood.*

V. **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE AND NEIGHBORHOOD**

A. **Site**

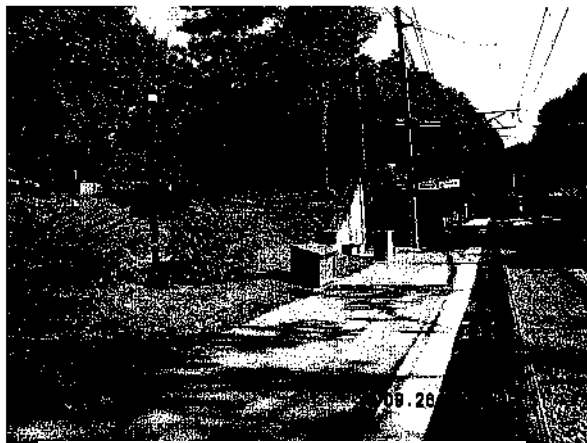
The subject property is located at 18 Station Avenue, Newton Highlands, Ward 6, Section 52, Block 22, Lot 1 and contains approximately 11,504 sq.ft. of lot area with approximately 3,000 sq.ft. in a Business 1 District and 8,500± sq.ft. within the Public Use District. The property is located just off of Walnut Street and adjacent to the MBTA Green Line right-of-way. The site presently contains the former railroad station and two foot pathways up to Station Avenue.

B. **Neighborhood and Zoning**

The subject property is located on the edge of the Newton Highlands Village Center. With the exception of the MBTA property, the majority of the properties to the east are within a Multi Residence 1 District, while most of the properties to the west are within the Business 1 and 2 Districts.



VIEW FROM STATION AVE



VIEW EAST FROM GREENLINE

VI. ANALYSIS

A. Zone Change

In reviewing this petition, there does not appear to be any reason to maintain the 8,500± sq. ft. lot within the Public Use District. The petitioner has indicated that the existing public pathways will remain and that the site will be landscaped and maintained as a result of this project.

B. Technical Considerations/ Parking Requirements

The following compares the proposed changes with the ordinance requirements for the Business 1 District and the existing non-conforming use, per Section 30-15 Table 3, as follows:

	REQUIRED	Existing	Proposed
Min. Lot Size	10,000 s.f.	11,504 s. f.	11,504 s. f.
Min. Frontage	70 ft.	289 ft.	289 ft.
Min. Setback			
Front	10 ft.	1.7 ft.	1.7 ft.
Side	12.4 ft.	51.9 ft.	51.9 ft.
Rear	0 ft.	24.28 ft.	24.28 ft.
Max. No. of Stories	2 stories	1 1/2 stories	1 1/2 stories
Max. Height	24 ft.	24.8 ft.	24.8 ft.
Max Floor Area Ratio	1.0	0.1	0.1

As the above table indicates that the station complies with the technical requirements of Section 30-15 Table 3, except the minimum front setback and the maximum height, which are pre-existing non-conforming. The petitioner's plans depict no changes with this proposal.

C Parking Requirements

Because the site is somewhat rocky and would be difficult and to pave, no on-site parking is proposed. The City's Zoning Ordinance establishes the required number of parking stalls for a medical office. As mentioned in the Zoning Review Memorandum, the proposed medical office use would require 13 stalls. Detailed calculations included in the zoning review allow a credit for the previous retail auto parts business use, resulting in the petitioner's request for a waiver of 3 parking stalls plus one handicap space.

The building's location adjacent to the MBTA tracks make it an easily accessible site for those who choose not to drive to this location. Patients using on-street parking and metered spaces in the nearby municipal parking lot can also easily reach the site. It is possible that patients will choose to park on nearby residential streets. The petitioner has documented the availability of spaces in the area. Employee use of nonresidential spaces will reduce the impact on residential areas

and is recommended. Because the nature of the use, the demand for patient parking is expected to be very low. A handicap parking space is shown on Station Avenue in front of the offices and if desired in this location, is subject to approval by the Traffic Council.

D. Signage

A technical analysis of the existing and proposed signage is provided per Section 30-20, as follows:

	REQUIRED	Existing	Proposed
Primary			
Free Standing Sign			
Max. Size	35 sq. ft.	None	5 s.f.
Max. Height	16 ft.		4 ft.
Wall Signs			
(West side)	50 s.f.	20 sq.ft.	16.28 s.f.
(East side)	50 s.f.		16.28 s.f.
			32.56 s.f.

The petitioner is proposing a small freestanding sign that will be only 25% of the normal height and size requirements of the Sign Ordinance. The Planning Department believes that the proposed "Historical Marker" signage is in keeping with the character of this historic railroad station and appropriate in a Business 1 District. The Planning Department believes that the secondary signs, again 25% smaller than normal practice will be attractive and enhance the site.

E. Landscaping

The petitioner submitted a landscape plan including significant new shrubs and groundcover. Existing landscaping will be augmented with 60 evergreen shrubs, 57 deciduous shrubs and 140 flowering daylilies. The site contains approximately 25 existing trees. The petitioner plans to remove 2 trees that interfere with the roof of the historic structure. Compliance with the Tree Preservation Ordinance is required and the Planning Department recommends that a payment be made instead of actual tree replacement, as the site has no room for additional trees. It is also recommended that the ongoing maintenance of the landscaping and litter control be noted as a condition of the special permit.

E. Relevant Site Plan Approval Criteria

1. Avoidance of major topographical changes

The proposed minor changes to the topography are proposed for a small portion of the landscaped area on the west side of the building. The Planning Department believes that the change in topography is negligible.

2. Avoidance of removal or disruption of historic resources

This former railroad station is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and subject to a preservation restriction. The petitioner proposes to renovate the structure in a manner that will maintain its architectural integrity and details and no physical extensions of this structure are proposed. The Newton Historic Commission reviewed and approved of the planned restoration at its September 27, 2007 meeting (*SEE ATTACHMENT "B"*). The Planning Department believes that the structure will be significantly improved by this project.

3. Screening of the structure from abutting properties

The existing trees combined with the proposed landscape improvements should provide an attractive complement to the renovated railroad station structure and provide ample screening to satisfy this criterion.

G. Relevant Special Permit Criteria

1. The specific site is an appropriate location for such use.

The proposed dentists' offices are appropriate uses of the upper floor of the station. The small practices should have minimal effect on the neighborhood and should be more compatible than the previous use as an auto parts store.

2. The use as developed and operated will not adversely affect the neighborhood.

The proposed change to two dental offices will be low intensity uses for this location and should not adversely affect the neighborhood.

3. Access to the site over streets is appropriate for the type(s) and number(s) of vehicles involved.

There are no changes to the existing site plan, and access and circulation will remain the same.

4. Screening of Parking Areas and Structures.

See comments in Section 6.G. 3 above.

5. Avoidance of Major Topographical Changes and Soil Removal.

See comments in Section 6. F. 1 above.

VII. SUMMARY

A. *Change of Zone*

The Planning Department views the change of zone of the remainder of Lot 1 from Public Use to the Business 1 District as a purely technical and appropriate.

B. *Special Permit*

The petitioner is proposing to convert an auto parts store into two dental offices. Given the general development patterns of the Newton Highlands commercial district and the MBTA station underneath, the site appears to be a compatible location for this use. The Planning Department, however, believes that some consideration should be given to limiting the future use of the building to professional offices with a similarly low demand for parking. The proposed signs are attractive and complementary to the historical character of the building and will enhance the site.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Zoning Review Memorandum dated August 29, 2007

ATTACHMENT B: Letter from John Rodman, Chairman of the Newton Historical Commission, dated October 5, 2007

Zoning Review Memoranth^A ATTACHMENT A

Dt: August 29, 2007

To: Stephen Buchbinder, Esq., representing Leonard Strauss, D.M.D.

Fr: Juris Alksnitis, Chief Zoning Code Official

Cc: Michael Kruse, Director, Department of Planning and Development
John Lojek, Commissioner of Inspectional Services

Re: Parking waiver for dental practice — reuse of former MBTA station.

Applicant: Leonard Strauss, D.M.D.

Site: 18 Station Ave., Newton Highlands

SBL: Section 55, Block 22, Lot 1

Zoning: BU-1(Building) rectangle in Lot 1
PU-(Land around BU-1 in Lot 1)

Lot Area: L1 — 11,504 sq. ft.

Current use — Lot 1: Vacant historic RR
station building.

Prop. use: Dental offices

Background:

On July 16, 1962, the City rezoned a portion of unzoned land owned by the then Metropolitan Transit Authority, predecessor of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), to Business A, now termed Business 1. The intent was to rezone the Newton Highlands Railroad Station building approximate footprint to a commercial zone to accommodate commercial uses within the underutilized building. Land surrounding the building is currently zoned Public Use. The building was most recently utilized by an auto parts supply business, which vacated the premises March or April 2005, per the MBTA. Subsequently, the MBTA conducted an auction of the building, with the successful bid offered by a Newton dentist who seeks to relocate his practice to the subject building. The applicant plans to restore this National Historic Register building and renovate the interior to accommodate two dental offices, while the track level Starter's Office will be retained for use by MBTA operations personnel. At the suggestion of the City and neighborhood residents, the applicant wishes to avoid paving a portion of this relatively narrow and rocky site for a formal parking area. As a result, the applicant seeks a parking waiver from the Board of Aldermen pursuant to Section 30-19(m).

Urban Design and Beautification .Commission Comments: See paragraph 5, below.

Administrative determinations

1. *Section 30-6, Allowed Uses for Public Use Districts* establishes the requirements applicable to land zoned Public Use. August 3, 1987, MBTA land formerly in the "unzoned" category was placed in the Public Use zone along with other unzoned land as part of zoning ordinance updates adopted by the Board of Aldermen. The subject Lot 1 contains a rectangular area with approximately 3,000 sq. ft. of BU-1 zoned land surrounded by Public Use (PU) zoned land. The premises and adjacent land were formerly owned and operated by the MBTA in connection with the Green Line Newton Highlands light rail station as part

of the railroad right of way. Recently the MBTA created a new Lot 1 containing the subject building and adjacent land, which has since been sold by auction to the petitioner. Lot 1 is shown on an ANR plan signed by the City Engineer 12/11/06 and recorded at the South Middlesex Registry of Deeds January 3, 2007.

2. *Section 30-11, Business Districts* establishes the uses allowed as of right and by special permit in the BU-1 zone. The petitioner proposes to utilize the former railroad station building main floor for two dental practices, allowed as of right in BU-1. However, site improvements, including walkway, sitting area and fence are proposed serving the HP accessible entry on the south side of the building, while new HVAC units will be installed adjacent to the north side. These improvements would be located within the Public Use zone immediately adjacent to the subject building. *Section 30-6, Allowed Uses for Public Use Districts* does not contemplate direct or accessory use of PU zoned land for purely commercial, i.e. non-public, purposes. As a result, the petitioner needs to delineate such portions of the site as required for access and building services, and request rezoning to BU-1 for such portions. Alternatively, the applicant may wish to consider rezoning all of Lot 1 from PU to BU-1 as it is now entirely in private ownership.

In addition, where a public use is abandoned and the associated land is used for a non-public purpose, the Newton Zoning Ordinance has since 1940 required that such land be rezoned to the appropriate zone. This requirement was in effect in 1962 when the station building area was rezoned Business 1 (formerly Business A) and was likely the basis for the original rezoning.

3. *Section 30-15, Table 3, Dimensional Requirements for Commercial Districts* establishes the applicable parameters for commercial development. As the subject historic building predates the adoption of the zoning ordinance in 1922, it is nonconforming in several respects. While the petitioner seeks to restore the building, as he does not intend to extend nonconforming elements of the existing building, zoning relief is not triggered as to the structure. However, proposed new HVAC units on the north side are subject to Table 3, Footnote 3, which requires a minimum rear setback of 15 ft. in a Business zoned site (assuming Lot 1 would be rezoned to BU-1) when abutting a Public Use zone, in this case the MBTA property along the rear lot line. Based on submitted plans, the HVAC units are located 4.8 ft. from the rear property line. The applicant needs to adjust the location of these units to conform to Table 3.
4. *Section 30-19(d)(12)* establishes the required number of parking stalls for a medical office. The proposed medical office use would require 13 stalls, including 1 HP stall [GFA: 2,450 sq. ft./200 = 13]. On April 15, 1963, the City adopted a series of parking requirements for businesses as part of the Zoning Ordinance. Prior to this date, no parking requirements existed either for the preceding railroad station use or any retail or office use. As railroad operations pre-date parking requirements, no parking is required for the Starter's Office on the track level. Following rezoning to BU-1 in 1962, ISD files indicate that Building Permit #1263 Ser. 424, August 15, 1962, was issued to Newton Highlands Auto Parts Inc. for alterations to accommodate a wholesale and retail auto parts business. As a result, the initial auto parts use preceded the adoption of the 1963 parking requirements. Upon adoption of the 1963 requirements, 14 stalls would have been required [$2450/200 = 13 + 1$ stall per est. 3 employees max. shift = 14] per prior Section 25-20(g)(7). However, based upon the text and intent of the ordinance in effect today, Section 30-19(c)(2)a requires the application of current parking factors in obtaining the number of required spaces for the formula A-B+C. Per Section 30-19(d)(10), the recent auto parts use would have required 10

stalls [$2450/300 = 9 + 1$ stall per est. 3 employees max. shift = 10]. Section 30-19(c)(2)a) provides that when a change of use results in an increase of the parking requirement, the formula $A-B+C$ applies as follows: $A:13 - B:10 = C: 3$. As a result, the petitioner is required to provide 3 parking spaces on site. However, as the applicant is willing to forego the construction of a paved parking area as noted above, this necessitates a waiver of 3 required parking spaces pursuant to Section 30-19(m). As Section 30-19(h)(2)c) indicates that 1 HP stall would apply, a waiver is also necessary for the 1 HP parking space which would otherwise be required.

5. *Section 30-20, Signs and Other Advertising Devices*, establishes the applicable sign requirements. The applicant requested consultation with the Urban Design and Beautification Commission (Commission) regarding four proposed hanging wall signs identifying each practice on the front and rear elevations, several directional signs, and a freestanding historic marker sign. The hanging wall signs would be mounted under the roof overhang on wrought iron brackets consistent with the historic character of the subject building with two primary wall signs facing Station Ave., and two secondary wall signs facing the MBTA tracks. The above signs were reviewed by the Commission at its August 15, 2007 meeting. While the Commission supported the overall sign program as well designed and consistent with the historic character of the building, a question was raised as to the need for the two secondary wall signs on the rear elevation, as there would be no access to the dental practices from this side, and as lines of visibility would be limited. Section 30-20(f)(2) allows a secondary sign for "...each separate building, entrance, or frontage on a street or parking area." The applicant also explained that the MBTA wished to ensure that the public utilizing the Green Line clearly understood that the subject building was no longer an MBTA facility. As there will be no entry to the dental practices from the MBTA track level, an exception per Section 30-20(1) is needed to accommodate the two rear secondary signs.

In addition, it was noted that building-mounted historic marker signs not exceeding 10 sq. ft. were allowed as of right pursuant to Section 30-20(c)(2)b). However, if the applicant wishes to proceed with a freestanding historic marker sign, such sign would need to obtain approval from the Board of Aldermen pursuant to Sections 30-20(f)(9) and 30-20(1) if located in the BU-1 zone or comply with Section 30-20(g)(4) if located within the PU zone.

6. The applicant is responsible for complying with Section 20-40 (Ordinance X-93) wherever fences are proposed.
7. The petitioner is responsible for complying with Ordinance X-143, *Light Ordinance*, as set out in *Sections 20-23 through 20-28* with respect to *Light Pollution*, and *Light Trespass*, respectively.
8. *Section 30-23(b)(6)* in conjunction with *Section 30-24(a)* requires the submittal of a landscape plan, which has been provided. While no parking is contemplated, the petitioner proposes various landscaping improvements within the site. In addition, the applicant is responsible for meeting the applicable requirements of *Section 20-31 through 20-39, Tree Preservation Ordinance*.
9. The station building has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1976 and is also subject to a preservation restriction. The applicant is responsible for meeting all applicable historic guidelines, procedures and requirements pertaining to review and

approval of contemplated alterations and/or restoration work. This includes review bodies such as the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Newton Historical Commission.

10. See table "Zoning Relief Summary" below.

<i>Ordinance</i>	<i>Zoning Relief Summary</i>	<i>Action Req</i>
	ezop g	
30-6 30-28	Approval to rezone the Public Use zoned portion of Lot 1 to Business-1.	X
	Parking	
30-19(d)(12) 30-19(m)	Approval to reduce required parking by 3 stalls. See para. 4, above.	X
30-19(h)(2)c 30-19(m)	Approval to waive 1 required HP parking stall. See para. 4, above.	X
	Signs	
30-20(f)(3) 30-20(1)	Approval of two secondary rear wall signs facing MBTA tracks. See para. 5, above.	X
30-20(f)(9) 30-20(1)	Approval of freestanding historic marker sign located in the BU-1 zone.	X
	Site	
30-23	Approval of site plan, landscaping plan, and related plans.	X
	Special Permit	
30-24(d)	Approval of special permit.	X

Plans & materials reviewed

References:

- Board Order #498-62, July 16, 1962, rezoning 3,000 sq. ft. portion to Business A

Plans:

- Plan titled "Topographic Plan of Land, Newton, MA, 18 Station Ave." dated June 14, 2007, prepared by VTP Associates, Land Surveyors - Civil Engineers, 132 Adams St., Newton, MA 02458, stamped and signed by James J. Abely, Professional Land Surveyor.
- Plan titled "Area Plan of Land, Newton, MA, Showing Existing Conditions at 18 Station Ave." dated June 14, 2007, prepared by VTP Associates, Land Surveyors - Civil Engineers, 132 Adams St., Newton, MA 02458, stamped and signed by James J. Abely, Professional Land Surveyor.
- Plan titled "Topographic Plan of Land, Newton, MA, Showing Existing Conditions at 18 Station Ave." with Zoning Detail, dated August 14, 2007, prepared by VTP Associates, Land Surveyors - Civil Engineers, 132 Adams St., Newton, MA 02458, stamped and signed by James J. Abely, Professional Land Surveyor.
- Plan titled "Topographic Plan of Land, Newton, MA, Showing Proposed Conditions at 18 Station Ave." dated August 15, 2007, prepared by VTP Associates, Land Surveyors - Civil Engineers, 132 Adams St., Newton, MA 02458, stamped and signed by James J. Abely, Professional Land Surveyor.
- Plan titled "Approval Not Required Plan of Land, Newton Highlands MBTA Station, Newton, MA 02461", dated November 27, 2007, prepared by Coler & Colantonio, Inc., Engineers and Scientists,

101 Accord Park Drive, Norwell, MA 02061, stamped and signed by Norman I. Lipsitz, Professional Land Surveyor, recorded at the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds January 3, 2007.

- Plan set titled "Newton Highlands MBTA Station, 18 Station Ave., Newton, Massachusetts 02134", dated 6/5/07, prepared by DLA Architecture, 1643 Beacon St., Waban, MA 02468, stamped and signed by Donald Lang, Registered Architect, consisting of the following:
 - EX-1 – Existing Track Level Floor Plan
 - EX-2 – Existing Street Level Floor Plan
 - EX-3 – Existing Roof Plan
 - EX-4 – Existing Front and Back Elevations
 - EX-5 – Existing Side Elevations
- Plan set titled "Newtonville Station, 18 Station Ave., Newton, Massachusetts", dated 8/20/07, prepared by Kattman Corporation, Landscape Architects, 24 Water St., Holliston MA 01746, bearing no professional stamp or signature [note: earlier plans were stamped and signed by Charles R. Kattman, Registered Landscape Architect], consisting of the following:
 - Sheet 1 – Landscape Plan
 - Sheet 2 – Site Development Plan
 - Sheet 3 – Site Details



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Department of Planning and Development

Michael J. Kruse, Director

(01 0-00-1 izu

Telefax

(617) 796-1086

TDD/TIY

(617) 796-1089

David B. Cohen
Mayor

October 5, 2007

Alderman George E. Mansfield, Chair and
Members of the Land Use Committee
do Clerk of the Board
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459

RE: Restoration of 18 Station Avenue, Newton Highlands

Dear Alderman Mansfield and Members of the Land Use Committee:

The Newton Historical Commission would like to express its strong support for the proposed private restoration of the former MBTA Newton Highlands Station located at 18 Station Avenue. The Commission feels that it is extremely important to preserve the architectural and historical elements of the structure and has been working with the new owner, Leonard H. Strauss, D.M.D., Attorney Stephen Buchbinder and Architect Donald Lang on a plan that would accomplish that goal. The Commission enthusiastically endorsed the proposal presented at its regularly scheduled public meeting on September 27, 2007.

In 1882, the Boston & Albany Railroad (B&A) system decided to exercise its right to acquire track owned by the New York and New England Railroad as far as Newton Highlands as part of the creation of a rail loop, or metropolitan circuit. The acquisition of track from Brookline to Newton Highlands was finalized February 17, 1883 but the construction of the line northwest to the B&A mainline was not begun until late 1884. A selection of dignitaries rode the first train on May 15, 1886. Construction on the Newton Highlands station began in September, 1886. It was designed by George F. Shepley, Charles Hercules Rutan and Charles Allerton Coolidge. Together they built a total of 32 stations, also including ones at Auburndale, Chestnut Hill, Newton Lower Falls, Waban and Woodland, representing a legacy that not only affected the B&A Railroad but also influenced railroad station design throughout the United States. With this in mind, the Newton Historical Commission reiterates its support for this project and hopes that you will look favorably upon their request for Special Permit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John S. Rodman".

John S. Rodman, Chair
Newton Historical Commission